

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 01865 121114Z

46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 EUR-12 IO-11 AID-05

CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15

TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02 CIEP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

L-03 PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 ORM-02 /132 W

----- 047895

R 121045Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0029

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA POUCH

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS CAIRO 1865

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR EG SY

SUBJECT: AKHBAR CHARGES SYRIA "DESTROYING" LEBANESE ECONOMY

1. AKHBAR FEBRUARY 12 INTRODUCES NEW CHARGE AGAINST SARG. RED  
BANNER HEADLINE: "CONSPIRACY TO DESTROY LEBANON'S ECONOMY."

2. AKHBAR'S LEAD STROY, DATELINED NEWS AGENCIES BEIRUT, CLAIMS  
SYRIAN BA'ATH GOVERNMENT IN RECENT WEEKS HAS UNDERTAKEN TO  
GRANT 730 LICENSES TO TRANSFER LEBANESE INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS  
TO SYRIA. AVERAGE VALUE OF THESE BUSINESSES IS FIVE MILLION  
"LIRA". BA'ATH GOVERNMENT IS GRANTING LAVISH FACILITIES FOR THESE  
INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING EXEMPTION FROM TAXES FOR SEVERAL YEARS,  
EXEMPTION FROM LABOR LAWS, PERMISSION TO TRANSFER PROFITS  
ABROAD AND TO PROFIT FROM MAJOR CONCESSIONS VIS-A-VIS CURRENCY  
LAWS. FURTHER, PAPER CHARGES, SYRIA HAS DECIDED TO PERMIT  
OPENING OF BRANCHES OF FOREIGN BANKS IN DAMASCUS, WHICH WILL BE  
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 01865 121114Z

EXEMPT FROM CURRENCY REGULATIONS AND WILL OPERATE WITH

FREEDOM OF FREE-ZONE BANKS.

3. AKHBAR COMMENTS THESE SYRIAN DECISIONS REPRESENT GREATEST OF ALL CONSPIRACIES AGAINST LEBANESE ECONOMY. " IT APPEARS SYRIAN BA'ATH PARTY, AFTER DESPAIRING OF THE BA'ATHI HIGH COMMISSIONER'S BEING ABLE TO RULE BEIRUT, HAS BEGUN TO STUDY OTHER WAYS OF DESTROYING LEBANESE ECONOMY AND IS INCITING OWNERS OF INDUSTRIES TO MOVE TO MORE SECURE ZONE, I.E. SYRIA... THUS SYRIA'S ECONOMY WILL BE SAVED"... AND SYRIA WILL SEIZE UPON FRUITS OF LEBANESE DESTRUCTION.

4. ALTHOUGH THIS AKHBAR CHARGE IS NEW, THERE HAVE BEEN CONTINUING AKHBAR COMMENTARIES, CHIEFLY BY AHMAD ZAYN, ATTACKING BA'ATH ON WHAT HAVE BECOME TRADITIONAL LINES. ZAYN ALSO MAKES ANOTHER NEW CHARGE FEBRUARY 12, CLAIMING BA'ATH HAD INTENDED AFFILIATE WITH WEST BANK AND ABOLISH PLO, BUT THAT THIS PLOT HAS BEEN UNMASKED. HE ALSO ALLEGES SARG INSISTENCE ON CONVENING UNSC IN JANUARY WAS SIMPLY INTENDED AS COVER FOR BA'ATH'S APPROVAL OF EXTENDING UNDOF MANDATE FOR SIX MONTHS. BA'ATH HAS CONCLUDED "AGREEMENT" WITH HUSAIN UNDER WHICH NO STIPULATION WAS MADE FOR RETURN OF PALESTINIANS TO JORDAN, MORE EVIDENCE THAT BA'ATH ACTS AGAINST PALESTINIANS.  
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